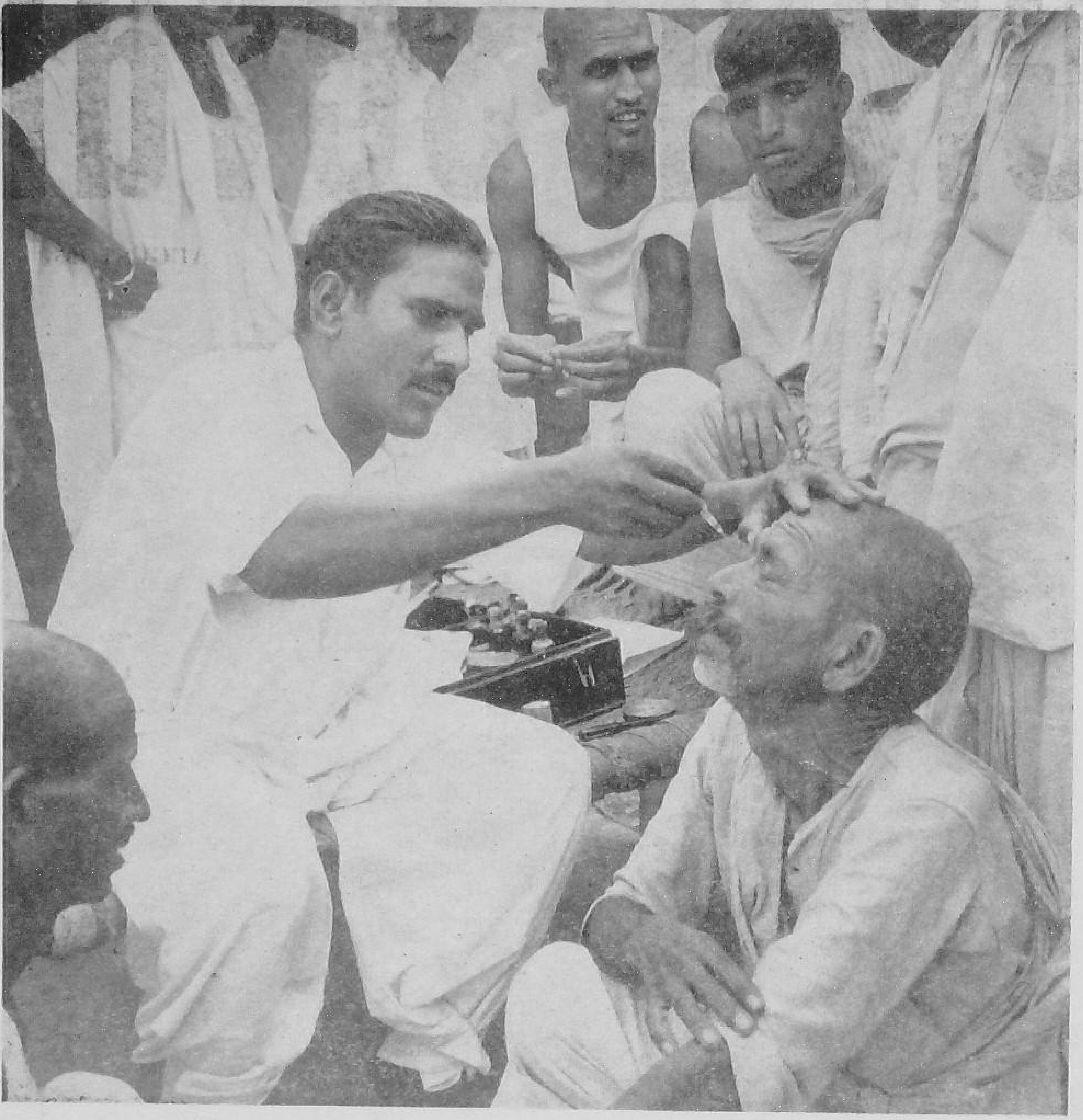
Gram sevak

BASIC AGRICULTURAL TRAINING SCHOOL
15 OCT 1957
PATTUKKOTTAI

AUGUST 1957



New Horizons : Our Health Programme

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

In the community development programme we have gradually built up an organization which is very big and far reaching and going down to the village level. You can almost immediately, or quickly, reach your village level worker. How far the organization works, well or badly, is another matter, but it is an organization and it is the biggest organization in India so far as I know and is becoming bigger and bigger. *(Jawaharlal Nehru in an address to the conference of State Ministers for Information.)*

GRAM SEVAK

Sravana-Bhadra 1879

Vol. 4 August 1957 No. 1

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Editor : D. Raghavan

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TO HIS HIGHNESS THE B.D.O. OF

Dear Friend,

Five years ago, no one could believe that it was possible to awaken our people in the villages, to do a village programme through a Government apparatus and to enlist the enthusiasm on this programme of the people and their representatives. Yet, almost a miracle did take place. Eighty solitary officers who received a training for one month, which was no training at all as we look at it now, went all out like mad men charged with a mission. They succeeded in making such an impact on the people that a decision had soon to be taken to cover the country as a whole with this programme despite all the difficulties involved. We have had hundreds of B.D.Os. since then. A large number of them have done a job which is nothing short of outstanding. They have tried to transform the outlook of the people, and in the process have themselves undergone a transformation.

Unfortunately, however, a new trend has lately begun to creep into the programme. Instead of men with a mission, we seem to be facing a new tribe working, I presume unwittingly, to put the clock back. This tribe, I know, belongs also to India. It consists of our own kith and kin working obviously without guidance and without an understanding of this programme. To you, if you belong to this tribe, I have been thinking of writing for many a month. I could not decide how to get at you. We send out so much of literature to touch your heart and refresh your mind. But I find not infrequently that these lie with you in sealed lockers or in dust heap. You are, rarely if at all, aware of their existence.

I was not sure if you read the 'Kurukshetra' or 'Gram Sevak'. I was sure however that the Gram Sevak does treat this journal as his own. The poor Gram Sevak according to you is a low-down functionary whom you can order about. He is however the only person I find, who is seriously face to face with this programme. Therefore he should be eager to learn all he can, to equip himself for the growing job he has in hand. He would, therefore, come across this letter sooner or later. I am taking the off-chance that someone from amongst your Gram Sevaks in the Block, will have the good sense to bring this to your notice if it does not cross your path by itself.

If I have chosen this medium to address you, let me assure you it has been because I am deeply worried about you. I am not worried about our programme because the programme is in tune with the time. Our village people have been starved for centuries, of all human attention. They have now a Government of their own which they alone can make or unmake for a certainty. Therefore sooner or later they will enforce their will and secure what is their share out of the bounties that this country offers. Good behaviour

on your part may ease the process. Bad behaviour on your part can but delay the settlement; but the day of reckoning can be held up by no human force.

You will remember, we had 550 Indian States during the British Raj. These Indian Princes by and large carried on their pastime at the mercy of the paramount power. They had little or no obligation to the people. When the British left on August 15, 1947, the props fell down because there was no ground on which the props could stand. So collapsed the centuries old princely order. Our Princes were sensible people. They saw the "Writing on the wall", they accepted their fate, they agreed overnight to act and live in conformity with the normal obligations that the new citizenship of a new free State demanded. You ought to understand, your Chief Minister takes his mandate from the elected legislature, your Development Commissioner takes his orders from an elected Council of Ministers. Your Collector takes his orders from the Development Commissioner, and works, or will soon have to work, in close collaboration with an elected Committee on District Planning and Development. The same process will have to repeat at your level also much sooner than you are ready to believe now. Paramountcy has lapsed from the British crown to the people of India. You can escape this realisation to your peril alone.

Now, our leaders who provided leadership on the ground have been engaged, since the dawn of our independence, in legislative and other duties. The pressure on them in the Parliament, the State Legislature and other institutions leaves them little time to provide day-to-day leadership to people on the ground in the new democracy that is and must shape on the ground if our democracy on the top is to be secure. As a result there is a "Power vacuum" in the villages. That there will be thousands of people clamouring to occupy this "Power vacuum" is nothing to be surprised at. There is dark ignorance that pervades our parched-up villages. Money-lenders, landlords and similar other tribes have flourished in the villages because tradition for, and competition in, constructive service, have not been widespread. Therefore the prevailing trend is to lead by shouting the loudest or by treading on the faith of our people.

We proposed to delimit India into 5,000 clear administrative units. We called them the Development Blocks. We placed you as the chief representative of Government to be in charge of the development of 60,000 to 70,000 people. We knew you could not do it alone. So we placed Extension Officers to deal with all Nation-building subjects at that level. These officers were to be your eyes and ears and your arms in action. We placed 10 Gram Sevaks, one in charge of 10 villages, after adequate basic and extension training. We thought you would make a working team with these workers and function as their elder brother.

A people's programme in a democracy cannot grow, much less sustain itself, unless there are people's institutions in sufficient number manned by chosen representatives of people who will grow through work corresponding to the demand on their services. Through centuries of inaction, we know, we have not only gone rusty in our muscles, but what is worse, our mind is

clogged and it is incapable of acting on its own without external stimulus. Our muscles and minds had therefore to be trained to resume normal functioning. We therefore organised a system under which we continue gathering experience from the ground, distil these experiences at the Centre and send these back in an unending stream so that these thoughts could continue feeding the mind and activating the muscles of all our workers around you in the Block. What do we find today?

We make the unhappy discovery that, perhaps even without knowing it, you have begun to forget the minor whom you were charged to bring up to adulthood. You are tending instead to occupy the "Power vacuum" and instal yourself as His Highness the Ba-da-Saheb of....... Instead of using the Extension Officers and the Gram Sevaks as your comrades in a battle against the darkness, you are tending to use your substantially unlimited powers to coerce them into functioning as "Bar-Kan Daj" at the behest of your Highness. Are you facing the fundamental problems of development? If you did, we should have had some reverberations of it. The literature we send out to you would not then have been the fodder for white ants. You will readily see what an opportunity you had for serving the people and incidentally yourself. You had the blessings of the past generations of martyrs who died in the battle of our emancipation. You have the full-hearted support of all our leaders from the Prime Minister down to the village sarpanch. You have the resources of the entire Government at your beck and call. You have all the powers that any one could demand for serving a new people, a historic opportunity which rarely comes to a mortal. Instead of using all these for the purpose for which these were at your behest, you are tending to aggrandise yourself and establish a new Tehsildar Raj which, if you had eyes at all to see, you would know cannot sustain. I said, I am worried about you. You now know why I am.

History will not give this chance once again to you. In fact if you fail to avail it, you can only be overtaken by the nemesis that must inevitably follow. I write this as an open call to you to re-think your position, to take a dip again in a clear stream nearby and begin afresh treating your assignment what it was to be. You should then relearn to treat the workers alongside as the comrades they were to be, to develop the village institutions and the representatives of people who man them as the paymasters at whose bidding you are to act. If you did all this, your Block Advisory Committees will take on a different complexion. You would have multiplied the partnership and we could have proceeded in right earnest towards a real "People's programme".

I am your brother. I owe it to you to tell you what you are heading for. I send this as a warning—lest you are still ignorant of your role. The B.D.O. is the chief servant of the people at the Block Headquarters. He shall not be the master.

I wish you Godspeed in the direction of the People's Raj.

From a Farmer's Son.

Free, Frank and Forthright

We had an exciting time in the Lok Sabha recently when the subject of Community Development came to be discussed at the time of the presentation of the Union Ministry's Budget. It was exciting because discussion was free, frank and forthright. Members of Parliament showed special interest in the subject because our programme affects the life of nearly 85 per cent of the people living in this country. The happiness and the well-being of these people have always been the first concern of the people's representatives in the Parliament.

Everyone recognized the need for a programme like ours but not everyone agreed that the programme was working satisfactorily. Handsome tributes were paid to the work of Gram Sevaks and Gram Sevikas in the field. But there was also criticism that village workers "did not contact with the masses". Some doubted if they could bring to their work the same enthusiasm and the spirit of dedication which Gandhiji's followers in the Constructive Programme had. The Evaluation Report was quoted by many members to support their feeling of dissatisfaction. Indeed, even a cartoon in our Journal *Kurukshetra* was quoted by a member as revealing certain defects in the Programme. We could see therefore that every piece of criticism was meant to improve the working of the Programme and not to damage or weaken it. The fact that inspite of all the various faults, some of which can be traced to the past, the Programme has been able to prepare the villager for a new way of life was recognised by a large number of members. And yet there was an evident sense of vague disappointment that the Programme needed improvement in many aspects.

Some of their important grievances about our programme were: that it had not succeeded in getting people's co-operation in the Programme and had not been able to bring about a change in the psychology of the people; that some of the officials like the B.D.O. and S.E.O. and others continued to have the same old bureaucratic mentality and naturally they could not enthuse the people very much; that the success in the physical targets that the programme could achieve was mostly due to the Governmental aid and once the aid was stopped, the development activity would tumble down.

It is now for the Gram Sevaks and the vast masses of village people to prove that these fears and doubts expressed in the Lok Sabha are unfounded. It is their duty and their privilege to make the best use of their opportunity for public service which is now available under this programme to thousands of young men in this country.

—A Field Worker

We did It in 44 Hours

His Excellency, the Governor of M.P. was visiting our Block on 6th April. We were given about 4 days notice of his visit and in the monthly staff meeting of the Block personnel, suggestions were asked for by the B.D.O. about the most original way of receiving the Governor. It was decided that we should do away with the usual custom of garlanding the distinguished guest and presenting him caskets and addresses. We thought that perhaps it would be much better to construct one of our Community buildings in as short a time as possible and make a presentation of it to the Governor. We started work of constructing a seed store of the size 30' x 40' with two rooms—one office and one verandah, at 3-45 P.M. on 4th April. The work was distributed equally among all the members of the staff. We worked day and night and completed the whole building on 6th April at 11-45 A.M. The material for the building had to be collected during these two days' time from a distance of 10 to 11 miles which made our task still more difficult. The Governor arrived at 12 noon on the 6th April and all of us received him near the building which had just been completed in his honour! When he came to know about what we had done with the help of the villagers within 44 hours, he was greatly surprised and appreciated our work.

—A Gram Sevak

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Points of View

Forgotten

Sir,

We, the Gram Sevaks working all over the country, used to get 'greetings' on the Republic Day every year from Shri S. K. Dey, our beloved Community Project Administrator but this year it seems he has forgotten his comrades after having become a Minister for Community Development. I would like to remind him through this letter not to forget us.

Yours etc.
R. R. Kulkarni,
Gram Sevak.

Kannad Community Dev. Block,
P. O. Chapanar,
24-7-57

[We understand that the practice of sending the greetings has not been discontinued by the Minister. This year the letters were addressed to the Gram Sevaks through the B.D.Os—Ed. G.S.]

In A Huff

Sir

I should like to narrate my sad experience through the columns of your esteemed Journal 'Gram Sevak'. In one of the villages under my charge, we decided to construct an approach road to connect the main high way. I had taken about three years to persuade the people to agree to this proposal. The Government agreed to contribute 50% if the villagers contributed another 50% either in cash or through Shramdan. One day the B.D.O., the Tehsildar and the Senior Supervisor came to my village on a tour. Unfortunately, they expressed their great anger on the reluctance of the villagers and some of them perhaps did not behave properly. The result was that the villagers refused to co-operate in the matter and the B.D.O. and others left the village in a huff. I decided to approach the villagers again. There was a marriage ceremony going on in which I fully participated and after the ceremony was over, I requested the villagers to reconsider the matter and finally, they said that while they could not pay in cash, they will be willing to pay in Shramdan for the construction of the road. I rushed to the B.D.O. and gave him the news. But he had taken the attitude of the villagers to heart and refused to do anything for the people of this particular village. The whole plan thus disappeared into thin air.

Yours etc.
R. R. K.

Marriages are made in Heaven?

Sir,

In one of my villages, the people have a special reason to be grateful to the Community Development programme. It has solved their marriage problem. Before the programme started, this particular village had no irrigation tanks and even drinking water was scarce. Villagers in the neighbouring areas refused to give their daughters in marriage to the young men in this village because of this difficulty. Then came the Community Development programme. It did not take me long to convince them about the usefulness of the programme. As soon as they saw that they could have both the irrigation tanks and the drinking water wells, they at once agreed to co-operate. The attitude of the neighbouring villages has completely changed now. Their marriage problem is solved.

Yours etc.
Chandralal Vyas V.L.W.

Khadgda, NES Block
Sagwara Distt. Dungarpur, Rajasthan

Sweeping Generalization

Sir,

In Kerala State, we are generally told that the Community Development programme has proved a failure. It is a sweeping generalization which is not warranted by facts. I must, however, admit that we have not achieved that measure of success which we should have normally expected. I feel it is partly due to the peculiar conditions prevailing in Kerala and I wish to suggest the following points to help the situation.

Since the geographical, cultural and economic position of Kerala is different from other States in India, the Plan should be adapted to the conditions of Kerala. It should give priority to cottage industries. Instead of helping the rich to become richer, it should make possible for the poorer section of the population to come up by relaxing all the

rigid rules and regulations which make it difficult for them to get any financial help from the State. We have already made a great deal of improvement in our roads and canals and therefore, attention should be diverted more towards social and cultural side.

Yours etc.
Malayattur P.O. E. S. Bhasi
Gram Sevak,

Transfers

Sir,

Many of us Gram Sevaks have been blamed for not putting our best in order to make the Community Development programme a success. May I point out some of the difficulties that we come across and the removal of which could be of a great help. Our main problem is the frequent transfers. After the training of the Gram Sevak is over, he is posted to a particular Block. It is necessary for him to be in that Block for at least five years, in order to get tangible results out of his efforts. He barely settles down in his work and in a year's time he is transferred to another Block. These frequent transfers have made our task extremely difficult.

Yours etc.
Ramesh Ch. Akhanda.
V.L.W.
C.D. Block Dharmanagar,
Tripura.

Wells—Old and New

Sir,

While grant-in-aid to the extent of 75 per cent is given for the construction of new drinking water wells, not much is being done for the repair of the old wells. Will the administration take steps to keep uniform proportion of grant-in-aid for construction of new wells as well as the repair of the old ones so that the villagers will think of getting the old wells repaired before running after the new ones. Considerable amount could be saved thereby.

Yours etc.
D. B. Moharil
C. D. Block, Narkhed.

Too Good To Believe

Sir,

Here are the impressions of Puran Singh, a sixty years old villager of Kali Nagar, about Community Development programme: "There was a time when the villagers remained standing before officers who treated us like slaves and rebuked us for trivial matters. Today I cannot believe the change that has come about in their attitude. The officers come; they sit among us; eat with us and discuss frankly all the problems pertaining to the village. We are consulted on every point and our advice is given due consideration. My village has also undergone a great change. We have community drinking water wells, canals for irrigation, schools, soakage pits, kirtan, bhajan and dramas in which all the people along with the Government officials participate. I am happy to have lived to see all this change."

Yours etc.
Raghubans Narain Singh
Asstt. Dev. Officer,
NES Block Saur (Rampur)

Personal Vs. Group Contact

Sir,

I had rather an unsual experience in one of the villages put under my charge. After my first appointment as a village level worker, I called a meeting of the village people and tried to explain to them the meaning of the Community Development programme and the difference that it could make in their lives. They listened to me patiently and offered all their co-operation. But later on, when I approached them again for their co-operation in starting a few schemes, they cold-shouldered me and refused to do anything in the matter. Meanwhile I was transferred from this village.

I was again transferred to this circle after one and a half years and the village was again put in my charge. This time instead of seeing the villagers in a group, I contacted every individual and shared my hopes and aspirations with them. A marvellous change took place. Individually each villager helped me what collectively they had refused to do. Today, the village boasts of a public prayer house, Panchayat Ghar, a school building, drinking water wells—all done through the co-operation of the people.

Yours etc.
S. S. Gaydhani,
Village Worker,
C. D. Block, Tumser
(Bombay)

THE PROCESSION

Wg. Cdr. Ramunni

THEY HAD walked the whole day and now it was getting dark. They did not know how many miles they had done or how many miles more they had to do. Nor did they care. Narayan Deb Barman, his wife and daughter had always lived in the hills of Tripura. They lived in a "Tong-Ghar", a house built on top of a hill. Entirely made of bamboos, this single roomed hut was built on stilts. A man could walk under the house. Steps cut into a log of wood led to the platform. There was a verandha where the old and the young sat and walked in the sun, cleaned each others' hair or dried their fish. The floor of the single room was made of bamboo but one corner was mud plastered and on two mud ovens they did all their cooking. The vessels were all made of clay, all made by themselves. But there was one frying pan. This was bought a year ago when Narayan went out with the 'Crowd'. Yes that was all that he knew. He had gone out with the crowd.

The children played about under the house during day and were brought into the house at night. The dog stayed with them all day and night and wailed when the panthers came and barked when the jackals, tried to take the children away. They had reared pigs which grunted and moved about and dirtied and cleaned the ground alternately. They loved them all. They had none else so close to their heart or near to their house. They were landless. But all the land around was their own. The hills and the valleys which they called *tilla* and *lunga* stretched as far as their eyes could reach. No outsider had ever come there to spoil the "noiseless tenor of their way". No one had thought of civilizing them. No one had taught them to run before they could walk. As summer was about to end, Narayan and his wife and daughter along with distant neighbours went to the bamboo forests and cut them down. Then one day they set fire to them. From the distance they watched them blaze away lighting the sky with golden glow. The crackling noise and the blinding light kept them awake the whole night. The wife served the home brew in bamboo mugs and they both smoked the "fire of peace" through their bamboo pipe. They had heard thunder or was it not. They had wondered whether they were late with their *jhum* and whether the rains would come down before the seeds would come up or would the seed be washed away by early monsoon.

Today all that was far behind. It was a couple of days ago that one of his relations came to him and told him that he should join the crowd. He would get clothes, more money and bullocks. The big chief was coming from the plains. On the other hand if he did not come, he would be driven out of the hills and he would be taken away to the plains. He agreed and along with his wife and daughter joined the crowd.

Now others joined them. They did not ask each other where they were going. They asked about each others' "Jhum". How much they earned from their last jhum. How much more the Mahajan had to be paid. They walked and they walked. The moon had come up when they hit a big village. There were many others there and they found

that they were welcome. There was a talkative youngster from the plains. He received them and talked to them in their own language. Here was a friend. Some one who could talk to them as they did. It was always so difficult to talk in a strange language once they reached the plains. They talked late into the night. The stranger told them all about Government and parties about taxes and rents, about schools and dispensaries. He told them something about the big crowd that would meet them next day.

In the afternoon they reached the town. Narayan Dev Barman had been there before. The first time he was frightened, later he was amazed, then he was interested. But now he had decided that he was happy in the hills. There was no crowd to push, there was no noise in the hills. This was the second visit of his wife. She had been there long back. She found many changes. She started explaining to her daughter what she had seen then. But the girl was not listening, she was clinging hard to her father's shirt as she walked, jumped, tripped and was dragged along through a sea of humanity. Her mother who was clinging to her cloth was pulling her to the side of the road and pushing her head to look in front.

They were just in time for the procession. More people came to push them into single file. The leader had started. Narayan strained his ears. But he could not catch the words as the leader was too far away. In fact he did not even know that the leader had stopped and it was time for him to shout.

He missed his turn a couple of times. But sub-leaders walked up and down the line, shouted the slogan into his ears. In a few minutes, he shouted with the others, he was following the leaders of the procession, he was ventilating the grievances through the placards, he was part of the democratic set up, he was part of the procession that was described in the next day's papers as "A successful protest by 12,000 tribesmen . . ."

RURAL INSTITUTES

Question : Could you or any one of your readers enlighten me about the Rural Institutes which are being very much talked of these days?

As you are well aware University Education in this country has been mostly confined to the city-dwellers. Those in the villages have not been able to have opportunities of acquiring University education. In its Report, the University Education Commission pointed out in 1948 that the present Universities were largely catering to the urban needs without taking into consideration the requirements of the 80 per cent of our population who lived in rural areas. The Commission have, therefore, recommended the establishment of Rural Universities. The Committee on Rural Higher Education appointed later by the Government of India went further into the question and recommended the establishment of Rural Institutes. They suggested that while the standards arrived at in Rural Institutes should not be less than those in the Universities, the approach to education should not be merely academic, but through work, extension and research.

The Government of India accepting the recommendations of the Committee selected 10 institutions which were already working under Gandhian ideology. These are: Viswa Bharati, Shantiniketan; Jamia Millia, Delhi; Vidya Bhavan, Udaipur; Sarvodaya Mahavidyalaya, Gandhigram, Madurai; B. R. College, Agra; Lok Bharati, Sanosara (Saurashtra); Shivaji Lok Vidyapeeth, Amravati; and Mouni Vidyapeeth, Gargoti and Rama Krishna Vidyala, Coimbatore. These Rural Institutes will have three sections, namely, a four-year course in Rural Services equivalent to the B.A. in universities; two-year course in agriculture and a three-year course Civil Engineering. Only those who have completed Matriculation, School Final or Post-Basic Education are eligible for admission to these courses.

A LETTER TO GRAM SEVIKA

My dear Rukmani,

I am very happy to learn that you have been selected as a Gram Sevika. The Social Welfare Board is to be congratulated for coming to the help of widows, deserted wives and poor girls in this way by giving them some such employment.

Your married life was a tragedy. You lost your husband within two years of your marriage. To add to your misery you have a child to be brought up although you yourself are not able to make both ends meet.

Your parents are poor, while the family into which you married was almost destitute. How can your father with his petty job and his many responsibilities think of helping you and your child? That too, without even having repaid the debt incurred for your marriage? That is why it is good you have gone in for such a job as it was imperative for you to secure one.

But there is one point. Do you happen to realise the exact nature of the work of a Gram Sevika? Do you know what you have taken on?

In memory of Kasturba as part of the dream of Mahatma, this scheme was formulated and its aim was to provide a few facilities at least to our villagers who, bereft of any comfort, are dependent upon sky and the land.

After a year's training at the Kasturba Centre near Erode, you will be sent for service to a small village in our State. You know the conditions obtaining in our villages. There will be about 70 to 80 huts, for drinking water a tank or a well, for transport a bullock cart without even cover; a ruined temple, a grocer shop where you can get salt, matchbox and kerosene, and in the rainy season you will sink up to your knee in mud, and in summer a blazing sun, and occasionally at its own whims and fancy, a sluggish bus. To catch that you must walk a mile or so. For the sons of the farmers there is no school. For the mother there is no maternity help. You won't get coffee or tea. This is the life in a village and this is the place where 70 to 80 families, say 300 to 400 persons live out their lives, breathe, procreate and die. Only to improve the conditions in these villages there are these District Planning Committees. And you are fortunate to engage yourself in that multi-purpose programme of rural welfare and it is essential that you have to understand the needs of the villagers with sympathy.

Therefore, I am giving you a few ideas. I hope you would carefully consider them.

You must learn to think of yourself as a woman of the village and you must learn to move with them as one of them. If only you could feel towards them genuine love, this would be easy. You will have to overlook all the lack of facilities that I have listed above and come forward with the ideal of service. It will be very difficult at first. But it will prove easy after sometime. Though the villagers are not as much educated as you, they have more experience. No doubt there are blacksheep among them and you have to be on your guard and pick out the good. If only you could help them with affection, your work will become very easy.

You won't like several of the restrictions so usual with our villages. But so long as you live in villages you cannot afford to ignore them or to snap your fingers at them. You may belong to the highest caste and may be, the villagers you have to serve, may belong to the lower caste. According to our Constitution there is no difference in caste and therefore you have to move with and meet everybody and serve equally with-

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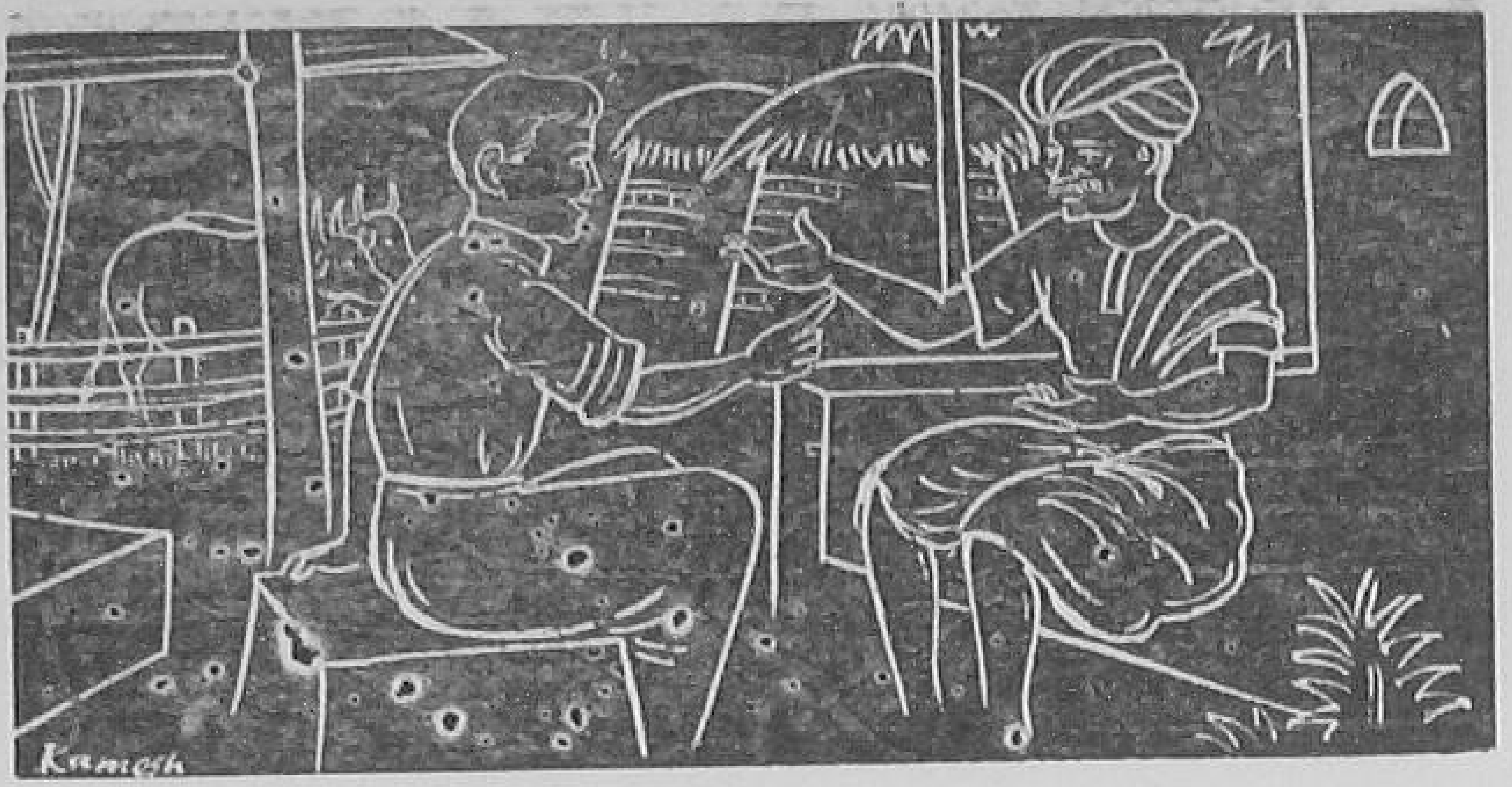


Bat-Chit

PASTEURISATION OF MILK—COMPOST—GREEN MANURE

Villager: Gram Sevak Sahib, we meet just once a month. You are busy all the time going round the villages, making new friends and let me hope, creating new problems for us to solve. I wish you could talk about something which could be less dull than what you have to say about our great programme to which, you say, you have dedicated your life. I would like you to talk more about our own food, the way we make it and cook it in our kitchen. But for a change, please do not begin to talk about your *Magan Chula*. We have already heard so much about it.

Gram Sevak: I agree with you that our programme can sound dull, especially if the talking is done from a platform. What I would like to speak to you is about the hundred and one things which would make life different if only we could pay a little attention to small details. Take the case of milk which we always boil too much. We do not realise that by such overheating, we disturb the proportion of salts in the milk and make them insoluble. The best way to avoid this is to pasteurise the milk by heating it to a temperature of 85 degrees centigrade instead of boiling it.

Villager: You sound like a professor making on us impossible demands. How are we to adjust the temperature to the degree required?

Gram Sevak: You are right. A former Professor of Banaras University has devised a simple mechanism by which even small quantities of milk can be pasteurised in the home. This device consists of a chemical compound which changes its colour from red to black indicating the heating temperature of milk at about 80 degrees. The compound is a red pigment placed in a small depression on an enamelled lid cover to be placed on the milk pot to be heated. As the heating of milk begins, the rising temperature of the milk below is conveyed to the lowest surface of the lid by the vapour issuing from the milk. The red pigment starts changing its colour to black at about 65 degrees centigrade and becomes complete dark at about 85 degrees, which is the proper degree for pasteurisation of milk.

Villager: But supposing I get this device distributed through your project, what is the big advantage I would get from pasteurised milk?

Gram Sevak: The advantages are two-fold. Firstly, pasteurising prolongs the keeping quality of milk by between 60 to 72 hours, dependent upon the surrounding climatic conditions. Secondly, by heating the milk to a temperature 20

A Letter to Gram Sevika

continued from page 9

out distinction of caste or wealth.

Your activities will include running of a children's centre, adult education centre, teaching of handicrafts and spinning, organization of Mahila Samaj and recreation activities. Do not take to your work only with the idea of earning a salary but do it with zeal. Let there be a welcome change in the village through your activities.

I am sure you will be highly successful in your work. Please write to me often and I will also be writing to you. You can write to me at any time if you have any doubts or require any advice.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

K. T. R.

degrees below boiling point, harmful organisms and bacteria in the raw milk are destroyed and the nutritious properties of milk are retained at their full value. When the milk is heated to the boiling point, as is the common practice in our homes, the fat content of milk gets separated in the form of a thick layer of cream on the surface. Of the three proteins present in the milk, casein gets changed at the temperature of about 65 degrees centigrade while the other two, albumin and globulin, get coagulated thereby reducing the nourishing value of milk.

Villager: Now that you have delivered yourself of what you have read in your expert's report, you have done your job. I have also done mine by asking you to supply me with that device about which you wax so eloquent. I wish your programme would mean coming down from the level of talking which you call 'education' to the ground level of supplies which I may term as 'action'.

Gram Sevak: You can be critical and cynical; for without questioning and doubt, we should hardly be able to make any progress. But you should at the same time, be more constructive and keep a receptive mind.

Villager: My grand-father had more land, better bullocks and milch animals. My father had less land and fewer milch animals. I have still less land, poor bullocks and no milch animals. My son will have still less land and poorer animals. My grand mother used fire wood, my mother used some fire wood, some stalks of crops and a little of cow dung. Today the eyes of my wife are all the time burnt with the smoke from the cow dung cakes. What will be the condition of my son's wife? The land used to yield bumper crops in my grand-father's time. I am not satisfied with my crops now. How can I improve them?

Gram Sevak: I will give you a simple instance of our ignorance. The cattle urine that is now wasted, if conserved will be equal to many crores of rupees in manurial value. It does not cost any money to conserve the urine, either; you have only to make up your mind to conserve it. I'll tell you the three simple ways of conserving the urine:

(1) Collect the urine in a pit near the bullock shed and carry it every day in a *ghara* to the compost pit.

(2) Spread straw and other crop waste on the floor of the bullock shed and allow it to absorb the urine. Put this straw into the compost pit every day.

(3) Sprinkle every day fresh earth on the floor of the bullock shed and allow it to absorb urine. Remove the earth to the manure pit every day. Every year every field should receive cow dung or green manure at the rate of 50 maunds—4000 pounds to an acre.

Villager: I do not have that much of manure nor can I buy it. How can I produce enough manure for my fields?

Gram Sevak: I shall tell you how you could do it.

(1) Put all the house sweepings and refuse in the compost pits.

(2) Put all the weeds in the fields and around your house in the compost pits.

(3) Since the above two measures will not produce enough of compost for all your fields, you must plant on your field bunds, on field boundaries perennial plants like Ipomea Carnea, Karanj or plants like Jayant dhaincha and sun-hemp. The branches of these trees and plants when sufficiently grown can be cut and put in the compost pits made in the fields.

(4) When you take so much trouble to produce enough compost you should make sure that you prepare a good quality compost. The compost that is being generally made loses half of its manurial value because it is defectively made.

Villager: I don't know if I can do all this. Will you tell me how I can make good compost?

Gram Sevak: You can do it in three ways.

(a) Adopt sectional filling of compost.

(b) Plant a tree near a compost pit so that there is shade over the compost pit.

(c) While preparing compost add bone-meal or superphosphate at the rate of 10 seers—20 pounds for every card load (10 mds or 800 pounds) of ripe compost. This is roughly equal to one handful of bone-meal or superpho-

sphate for every basket that goes in the compost pit.

Villager : It sounds all good. I take all the pains to prepare better and more compost but I find it difficult to manure every one of my fields. What shall I do about it.

Gram Sevak : You can make up for the shortage by green manuring. There are two methods of doing it.

(1) By raising of green manure crop in one field and applying it to several of your other fields.

(2) The second method consists of raising green manures in the field and ploughing it in the same field.

Villager : Since green manure is to be grown in the rainy season, I shall lose a food crop if I raise a green manure crop. What is the solution?

Gram Sevak : That is a good point. But you don't think that when the fertility of your fields has arisen, you can even afford to miss a part of your rainy season crop and can sow green manure and plough it under.

If your fields are ploughed and prepared in summer, we can sow with the first good rain a crop of moong (green gram). Urd (black gram). Lobia (cow-pea). Kulthi (horse gram) and plough these up after 4 to 5 weeks when I shall get about 25 maunds (about 2,000 pounds of green manure per acre). This method will be particularly useful on crops like paddy which are sown or planted 4 to 6 weeks after the first rain. In crops like maize, bajra, and jowar which are often planted soon after the first rain you can grow the same crops between the lines of jowar, bajra, cotton, maize etc. and plough the green manure crop under, six weeks after on paddy which is sown broadcast. You can adopt the same practice with sun-hemp or other pulses. You can also raise a nursery of dhaincha along with the paddy nursery and transplant the dhaincha along the borders of paddy fields and even in between the lines of paddy. Some of the border plants will be left for seeds and others will be buried in to the paddy by trampling them.

Villager : I cannot get the seeds of the green manure crop of sunn-hemp or dhaincha easily. Either they are not available or the price is too high. Can you suggest a way out?

Gram Sevak : Certainly. Each good farmer must produce his own requirements of seed. Don't use a green manure crop the seed of which you cannot produce yourself.

Villager : Should I green manure my fields every year?

Gram Sevak : For securing, ever-increasing yields you must green manure your fields every year but they must not be green manured very heavily i.e. at a rate not higher than 75 mds of green manure to an acre.

Villager : What about the cow dung? Can I apply heavy cow dung once in three years to the fields?

Gram Sevak : You can, of course, but it is better to apply one third of the quantity every year as that will give you higher yields over a period of three years. When the field is prepared for sowing the green manure, apply superphosphate at the rate of about 2½ mds for irrigated areas and areas of rainfall over 45″ and at the rate of 1½ mds for low rainfall areas. If after applying the superphosphate or bone-meal the seeds of green manures are sown, the crop of green manure is better and the nitrogen content of the green manure increases. If a crop other than paddy is to be sown soon after green manuring, a light dose of ammonium sulphate at the rate of about 30 seers to an acre may be applied to give a good start to the succeeding crop. Even in fields which are green manured and which have received compost and cow dung, it is necessary to apply fertilizers in moderate doses. It is not good to use ammonium sulphate only as soils require phosphates as well as potash (Here specify the crops of your area which require phosphate and potash manuring in addition to nitrogenous fertilization).

Villager : Can the fertilizers be used in dry areas?

Gram Sevak : In areas which receive as low as 15″ of rainfall phosphatic and at places potasium fertilizers can be used. A small dose of nitrogenous fertilizer if it is applied at proper time, could also prove profitable. The secret in dry areas is to get the plants to grow quickly so that the roots go down deep and they can withstand the drought. Superphosphate and potash increase the capacity of the crop to withstand drought and bear fruit.

"THE PAUPERS' CO-OP."

Sung Hsuch-Kuang

Deep in the hills of Tsunhua country in Sipu Village about ninety miles to the north east of Peking is the Chienming Farming Cooperative. The co-op is widely known, not by its true name of "Chienming" (Building Brightness) but as "the paupers' co-op". This was the name given to it in jest by local well-to-do peasants when it was formed in 1952. Recently I spent a few days in "the paupers' co-op". The first thing that struck me when I reached Sipu Village was the great number of new houses. And the next, the high proportion of newly weds. Many of these, I found, were former poor peasants.

Before liberation, the village was known far and wide for its poverty. It was nothing out of the ordinary for a family of five or six to live in one small room. According to older villagers, in the past forty years the only house to be built there was a small three-roomed cottage. But in the last twelve months houses with a total of more than a hundred rooms were erected by the co-op members. And among those who are now planning to build their own houses are some who only seven years ago begged for their living. At present, plans are under way for a new street and before long it will be lined with cottages.

Marriages, in the old days, were few and far between. There was hardly a girl of the neighbouring villages who would have looked on the prospect of marrying a man of Sipu Village with anything but dismay. As a result, there were many like old Chu Fu-chang who had to wait to get married until he was getting on for forty. Life is easier for the younger generation. Chu's son, who is now in his early twenties, was married last spring.

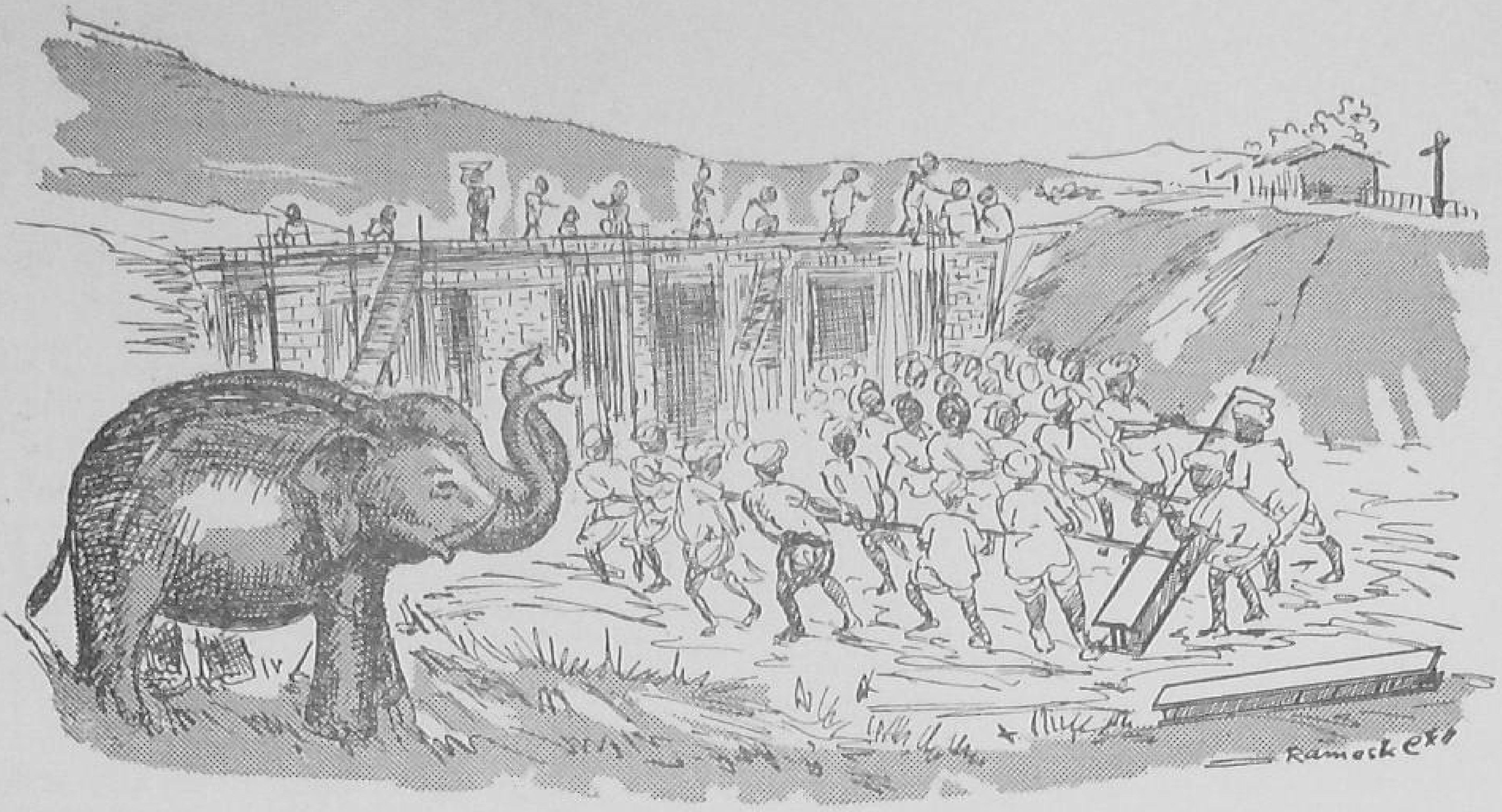
Peasant Wang Jung and his family of six used to share a single cotton quilt among them. Now he has a three-roomed house of his own and his family all have decent clothes and bedding. Early this year he bought his son an attractive red-lacquer bedroom suite as a wedding present. Everyone in the village remarks on the contrast between the way the Wang family live now and the way they used to live before.

Indeed, the villagers have good reason to feel pleased, for they remember how things stood some five years ago, when twenty-three of the poorest among them formed a cooperative. Although they pooled together their thirty-eight acres of meagre sandy land they hardly had a decent tool among them to work it with. Painstakingly, they scraped together whatever money they could spare, only to find that all it could buy was a three-quarters' share in the ownership of a donkey. Their efforts met with cold derision from their well-to-do neighbours, who dubbed them "the paupers' Co-op".

But they saw it through, and in doing so they have worked what is little short of a miracle. For the Chienming Cooperative now has a membership of 549 households. The land that in 1952 yielded an average of less than 600 pounds of grain to the acre, yielded 2,900 pounds last year. Various side lines like fruit-growing, livestock farming and noodle-making are now contributing to the steady rise in the income of the co-op members. Last year brought a good harvest and nearly all the members got twice as much income as the year before. Now they feel they are really on their feet. The name of this prosperous cooperative which started practically from scratch is known throughout the country. *(China Today)*

HELP! HELP!

"Sorry, I have nothing for your Gram Sevak to read".



AND THEN THE ELEPHANTS CAME

AJIT GUPTA

MUSCLES CAN do it, however, difficult the task be, and circumstances or providence comes to help those who help themselves, and, nothing succeeds like success. Such an experience the villagers of Palsit, Khargram, Karanda, Vhita, Nabastha, Bhairab, Begut, a few miles away from the Burdwan town, had while engaged in linking up a road from the villages to the Grand Trunk Road. It happened not very long ago.

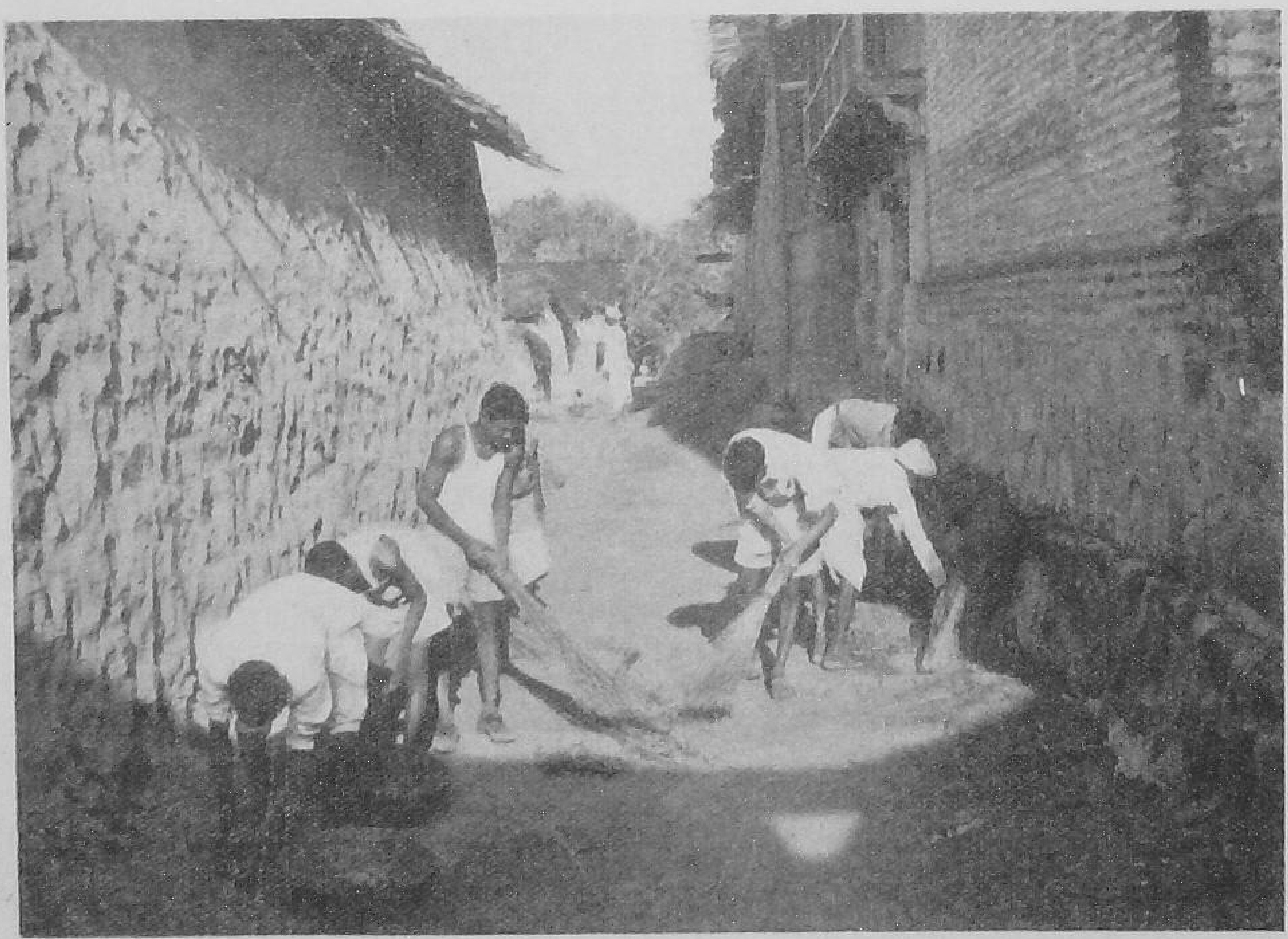
These villages fall within the Community Development Project Block of Saktigarh. There is a narrow village road to the town which they have been using for years, but, there was a "missing link" in the road, near the railway track a few yards away from the Palsit Railway Station. The Bank river made the gap and during the monsoon months it was full of water making it difficult for the villagers to cross. Some months ago when the Project authorities were discussing the villagers' needs and the ways and means to help them, under the Community Development programme, more than 10,000 villagers unanimously voted that top priority should be given to bridging this gap. The task was not easy, an improvised bridge of poles and planks would not do. The villagers had a strong will to do the job and the Project Executive Officer had some money available. They sat down and thought over the problem. Here was a little money and a large body of determined people to see it through. The Project Executive Officer suggested that to make a permanent bridge over the river, the villagers must contribute in cash or in kind. The villagers readily agreed and the enthusiasm among them knew no bounds.

In their hundreds they came to help to do the earth work, and to make the village road wider and more usable than what it was. Meanwhile, the Project Executive officer got the Government sanction for the bridge. Before long, the bridge, made-to-measure, arrived and the sections were unloaded. A whole battalion of villagers got about pulling the heavy beams of girders across the railway track but their first few attempts utterly failed. They were disappointed and for a few minutes looked puzzled. Human strength had failed against the sheer weight of steel. Meanwhile, they heard a rumour that some circus elephants were

passing by the Grand Trunk Road on their way to Calcutta. There was a ray of hope, providence had contrived a chance at last and they rushed to the Mahuts and implored them to come to their rescue. To their impassioned appeal the Mahuts responded. Three elephants were brought to the spot, but waved their trunks in refusal. Where were the straps and belts to pull the girders ? There were no logs of wood to lift and carry. The Mahuts went to fetch the belts. The villagers were watching helplessly. It was a race against time. In a few minutes the local train would be there and the duplicate track was still blocked. There may be an accident. Could something be done still ? The girders had to be moved and moved there and then. The might of the elephants had already given them inspiration and self-confidence. Then down came the army of villagers like an avalanche on the girders, and with bamboos, rods and ropes whatever they had. Two girders had already moved across the track while the third girder was half way through when the train came speeding in. An accident was imminent. Quite excitedly the villagers dangled pieces of cloth signalling the train to stop. The train came and pulled up a few yards away. This was a signal to the villagers to re-double their efforts and in a few moments the third girder was also moved across the bridge. The girders had been moved by villagers themselves all together.

Then with the help of engineers, these villagers constructed the bridge; the total cost of the bridge, including the expenses on the shed structures and the earth work was Rs 60,000, the people's share being their great will power and Rs 19,000, in manual labour. The elephants did return with their belts but only to discover that man, in a combined effort, had already achieved, what was rightfully their task. Muscles had done it, so they went back waving their trunks in appreciation of the superiority of man.

A Clean Sweep



THE STORY OF THE MUSTARD SEED

M. G. DEOLAKER

A VISIT to Ajanta and Ellora Caves was a part of our study tour at Aurangabad. India's brilliant past—the cultural the sculptural—stood before us in the form of those exquisite carvings and immaculate paintings that have defied time. If past was so brilliant, the future is going to be equally bright. No one will have escaped this happy feeling.

Our Vice-Principal is clever in story-telling. He always illustrates his point with a story. "Gentlemen, I will tell you a story," he would say and one after the other interesting and instructive stories flow from him. Your interest will be sustained throughout and at the end, he will make you accept his point. He appears to me to be a disciple of Lord Buddha. Well, this should explain his passionate attachment and fondness for the Ajanta and Ellora Caves. Lord Buddha employed this extension method with the skill and dexterity of a master. He called them parables. Said he, "It is with the help of parables, O monks, that men understand and discern the purport and meaning of any point, any statement, any presentation."

We had before us the painting of Kisa Gotami. The famous parable of the Mustard seed was so exquisitely depicted in colourful painting that it attracted the attention of all. Yes it is artistic, the weeping mother looks at the saint with an expectant hope and wishful thinking that she will obtain from him the divine herb that would bring back her child to life and restore her position in the family. Kisa was born in a poor family, but was not poor in her looks; her beauty earned for her the hand of the son of a rich merchant. She had no importance in the family of her husband. After all she had hailed from a poor family. Nobody paid any attention to her. It was only when she begot a male child that she gained a position of importance in the family. And now as luck had it, the cruel hands of death snatched her son away from her. She went mad. With the dead son in her arms, she went from place to place, house to house, begging for a medicinal herb to bring back the dead child to life. She was scoffed at, some banged the doors as she approached. A sympathetic man, however, directed her to Lord Buddha, who was having his sojourn in that place. So she rushed to Lord Buddha and prayed for help to bring back her dead son back to life.

The Buddha saw the woman with a compassionate look and said he: "Get composed Sister. You will have it. Get a handful of mustard seeds from any house and I shall bring the child back to life. But take care that the mustard seed must come from a house, never visited by death."

Kisa felt happy, she got life to her wavering feet. She rushed to the nearby house and begged for mustard seed.

"Yes, take this mustard seed, sister" the kind woman offered her the mustard seed. She would not take, for had not the master told her to bring the seed from a place never visited by death.

"Tell me first, sister, whether any one has died in your house, here before. I can't have the seed from a house where death had not its sway", said she.

"I am sorry, Sister, I lost my pretty daughter last year", the woman dried her tears with the end of her garment.

Then Kisa went from house to house, place to place. She found that some had lost his or her son, daughter, brother, mother, father, sister, husband or wife. Death had not spared any one.

"How foolish are you Sister? How can it be that there be no death in any family? It is universal," said a wise woman.

The light dawned on Kisa. She had the medicine at last. She rushed to Lord Buddha. "Enough with the mustard seed, O Lord. I see the truth. I shall now exert for the deathless state."

No amount of preaching could have brought Kisa to her senses. No sermon could have brought home to her the universality of death. She had to see and believe.

Another example of the efficacy of the extension method. Seeing is believing. Who says that a trip to Ajanta and Ellora Caves was not a study tour? Extension Method is found anywhere and everywhere. Well, we must become extension-minded. It is the agency through which we have to initiate and further a process of transformation of social and economic life of our villages. I comforted myself that the visit was not for sightseeing.

OUR JEEP DID IT

(Contributed)

After my training I was posted to Malhargarh Block. This was a new Block and we had to make a new beginning. As usual, the people had not taken very kindly to the Community development activities and with all my persuasion, cajoling, requests, they had remained unconvinced about the utility of the new methods. This was not all. We were also suspected of doing a positive harm to the villages through our new-fangled ideas.

When I had completely despaired of starting any activity under the Programme, an incident happened which changed the attitude of the villagers entirely. The Prime Minister was to visit this Block in March, 1954. The villagers were very enthusiastic about receiving him. All of us were busy preparing a ground and rostrum for the Prime Minister. Village carts were bringing materials and the V.L.Ws and other officers of all the branches were doing construction work of the rostrum with their own hands. In this activity and in our anxiety to complete the work before the visit of the Prime Minister, a villager came to us at about 3 p.m. He was fainting with anxiety and fatigue and told us that his wife was on the point of death because of birth pangs. He requested us that we should lend him our jeep so that he could bring the lady doctor to his house. Alhtough we could ill-afford it, the jeep was at once rushed to the lady doctor who came within half an hour's time, and attended to the dying woman. The delivery took place; the child was still born but the mother was saved. The poor villager heaved a sigh of relief.

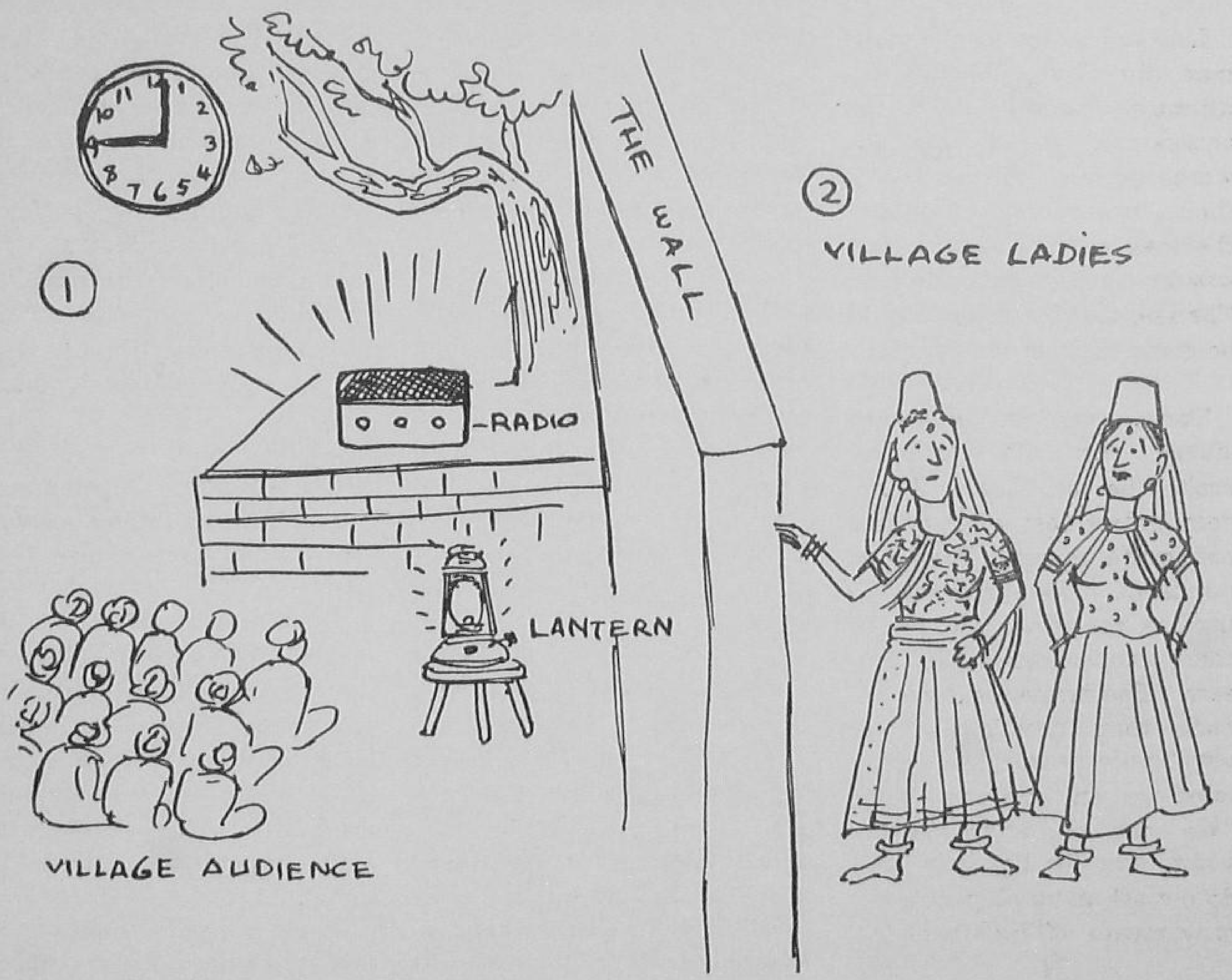
Soon this news spread in the village and the attitude of the villagers towards us changed completely. After this incident, I had no complaint about them and in almost every activity they helped me. Today, Malhargarh Block has a place of pride in the State. There are two Community Centres, fine drinking water-wells, children's park, a good building for the village school and a fine approach road to the village—all done through the initiative and the efforts of the villagers.

THE VILLAGE WORKERS DILEMMA

P. L. Vacher

GANGA SARAN, the newly arrived Gram Sevak was lodged by Paltu Singh Pradhan in the spare room attached to his hay-shed. Fresh from extension training of a year and half, the youthful village worker's mind was bubbling with new ideas. He immediately called a meeting of the cultivators of Kamalpur village to acquaint them with his multifold knowledge which would bring "Ramrajya" in the rural areas.

After throwing light on the varied programme of the project, the Gram Sevak dwelt on the immediate problem, viz., the Japanese Method of paddy cultivation. He unrolled a beautiful multicoloured chart and, speaking in the local dialect, showed the villagers how they could produce 50 mds. of paddy per acre



First Lady : Our village is going to be spoilt.
Second lady : How?
First : You hear the songs and music of city ladies whom that Gram Sevak Ramu brought; husband not yet come back home; even he lost the hunger before these singing ladies!

—D. V. Chawhan V.L.W.
N.E.S. Block Nanded Dist., Bombay State

against 15 raised by them at present. The cultivators saw the pictures of the grain-laden fields of the Krishi-Pandit who had been awarded Rs. 5,000 for producing record yield of 136 mds. of paddy per acre. The paddy-hero, who looked just a villager like themselves was also seen in the pictures speaking over the radio and shaking hand with the Prime Minister himself. The dumb-founded audience listened, saw and wondered.

Like any street-corner salesman the Gram Sevak, too, ultimately came round to the anti-climax of offering his wares for sale. He begged of the cultivators to intimate him the area each of them would sow by the Japanese Method. The seed and fertilisers would be given to them on Taccavi.

There was an awkward silence. An old cultivator broke the ice, "Listen Babu, year before last a supervisor had made us sow China-4 in our fields. The stalks rose as high as the arhar plants, but there was no grain in the corn-ears. The farmers did not get back their seed". "We are very poor people", he continued in an imploring tone. "We can do anything you want, but for heaven's sake do not ask us to play with our only means of livelihood."

The village level worker returned to his tiny quarter a sadder and wiser man. The Pradhan made him a grace-offer of half acre of his land to conduct the experiment. Six months passed. Ganga Saran whistled with joy as he cycled to the Block Headquarter for the staff meeting. He carried in his portfolio applications of all the cultivators of Kamalpur village for sowing wheat by improved method.

"Ganga Saran," said the Block Development Officer, shaking a maund-heavy head on seeing his indents" each V.L.W. can get only 25 maunds of seed and one ton of fertilisers". The dismayed Gram Sevak's heart almost sank.

"Sir, double this quantity is required in a single village. What can we achieve, if even essential supplies could not be arranged," he said.

"I fully sympathise with you. Last season we were only one Block in the district and everything was available. You have to manage with what has been allotted."

"What cannot be cured will be endured", murmured the Gram Sevak.

Two months later the Block Development Officer was invited to Kamalpur Village to witness the drama "Rana Pratap" being staged by the Yuvak Mandal. Ganga Saran thought this to be the only possible occasion when the two factions in the village would sit together. The Block Development Officer was to address the audience on Shramdan programme in the interval.

The shamiana was thronged by men, women and children from all Mohallas of the village. At midnight the climax scene of the Battle of Haldighat closed and the bell rang for the interval. Paltu Singh the Pradhan jumped on to the stage. He thanked the audience and the distinguished guest. He requested the Block Development Officer to keep a soft corner in his heart for this poor village and finally invited him to address the gathering.

There was loud clapping followed by dead silence. Music of the court-scene had lulled the multipurpose Officer to sleep as he leaned against the pillow half an hour earlier. The din and noise of the Battle of Haldighat could not awaken him. Ganga Saran was in a fix. He suddenly shouted at the top of his voice "Bharat Mata Ki" and the audience roared "jai".

The Block Development Officer got up rubbing his eyes. He was led to the stage.

"Sisters and brothers", he began. The ladies sitting in the dark corner of the Shamiana straightened their heads. Perhaps never before cognizance had been taken of their presence by the speakers in public meetings.

After formal thanks the Block Development Officer appreciated the lively spirit of the youngsters and the wisdom of the elders of the village. He was happy to see the Pradhan, the Gram Sevak and the villagers working like a team. He was sure

that keeping their petty difference aside they would take lead in the Shramdan also. We remember Maharana Pratap for his great sacrifices for our sake. The present villagers of Kamalpur could also be remembered by their sons and sons' sons for their sacrifice if they executed by Shramdan the proposed all weather approach road.

On 26th of January, ten days later, amidst great scenes of festivity, the new approach road was formally declared open.

February meeting of the Block Advisory Committee was attended by nearly 100 village Pradhans and co-operative sarpanches. Paltu Singh Pradhan was elected its President. He proudly told the members of his experiences and achievements. He declared, that his Gram Sevak was the most sincere, conscientious and industrious worker and much credit went to him. Grants for constructing pucca wells and a culvert in his village were gladly passed by the committee.

It was the month of March. Feverish efforts were being made by all the workers to complete the vouchers and draw the funds before the financial year ran out.

The Block Advisory Committee met again. This time there were no grants or loans available for disposal. Sarju Misra the Sarpanch of the co-operative Union was elected President.

Paltu Singh Pradhan of Kamalpur rose to speak, "Will the Block Officer tell us why our vouchers have not been passed for the full amount? Our Gram Sevak has rewarded us for all our cooperation and help by verifying the works for reduced sums" he said bitterly !

Before the Block Development Officer could say anything Sarju Misra the president of the meeting announced.

"Our friend Paltu Singh has forgotten what he said of his Gram Sevak in the last meeting held a month ago under his presidentship. Now when his inflated expenditure figures for wells have been reduced to the correct proportions, this 'most sincere and conscientious Gram Sevak' has become of doubtful integrity. If Paltu Singh likes and the authorities permit, Ganga Saran, Gram Sevak may be sent to our circle".

"No", Paltu Singh said somewhat shame-facedly, "I never meant this".

In April the District Planning Officer inspected the development work in Kamalpur village. He accosted a semi-naked, dreamy eyed cultivator named Sacha Bhagat and asked him if any useful work had been done in this area.

"No, nothing sir," Sacha Bhagat replied. There was a chuckled laughter from some people. The Pradhan bit his lip. The Gram Sevak started at him in surprise.

"Well, Sacha", Paltu Singh asked "Has not an approach road with a culvert been constructed?"

"Yes, the road is indeed constructed."

"Have not six wells been sunk and bathing platforms provided for you people? Have not handpipes been installed?"

"Certainly these have been sunk."

"Has not a radio centre been established where you hear news and Panchayat programme daily? Has not a children's park been laid?"

"You are right, Pradhanji."

"Have not hundreds of maunds of pedigree seed and manures been distributed to the cultivators?"

Sacha Bhagat nodded "Hum".

"Then why do you say nothing has been done?"

"All these things, of course have been done", Sacha Bhagat admitted non-chalantly, but his expression still seemed to say "A man convinced against his will is of his old opinion still."

Papaya Brings Prosperity

SITARAM PATIDAR of village Dawana, is today a prosperous farmer. He owns a papaya garden which this year has been contracted for a sum of Rs. 4,500. But five years back he was like most of the farmers of the area—poor and living from hand to mouth. His small plot of land did not yield enough crop to sustain his family through the year. He cultivated his land to pay off his debts and borrowed again to till his soil. This was the lot of most of the peasants of the area, which has now come under Rajpur Community Development Block. Then came the "Papaya boom", and the miracle happened. The lot of the farmers was transformed. Today they are enjoying a prosperity which they could not even dream of few years back. It is all due to that "golden yellow" fruit, papaya.

Rajpur is only 90 miles from Indore. Before the start of the project, it was a parched stretch of land inhabited mostly by people who were very poor. Shortly after its introduction, the Project introduced papaya cultivation in the area. Five years ago, there was hardly 60 acres under Papaya-cultivation, but today, the Project boasts of 3,96,000 Papaya plants spread over about 360 acres of land. This region now produces one of the sweetest varieties of 'papaya' in the country. It is already becoming famous and the fruit is in heavy demand in big cities.

The Project brings to the cultivators good quality—usually the famous Barwani seed, fertilisers and most important of all, irrigation and marketing facilities. So far, taccavi loans amounting to Rs. 8,05,000 have been distributed for power-pump, Rs. 30,00,000 for irrigation wells and Persian wheels and Rs 1,60,000 for fertilisers in the project area. Three major irrigation tanks of Seghwal, Satak and Borad pick-up weir are already under construction and when these are completed, it would become one of the most prosperous fruit-growing belts in the country.

In some villages such as Dewla, Dawana, orchard-keeping is becoming the main occupation of the farmers. In a single orchard, there may be as many as 5,000 Papaya trees. Generally, it takes 7 months for an orchard to bear fruits. Each tree gives fruits for two years before it is thrown out in the fields to be used as manure. Each tree gives about 100 fruits during the season.

Rajpur produces papayas of two varieties—the round ones and what are known the long 'kela' type. During the last season, the orchards of Rajpur block yielded 2,22,600 mds. of the golden fruit, a large quantity of which, upto about 500 truck-loads, was exported to far-away places like Bombay (300 miles), Delhi (550 miles) and Ajmer and the rest used in home-markets in the State itself.

So far the Papaya orchards, in most of the cases, are sold to contractors by the cultivators, for they do not have any marketing facilities or trucks of their own to carry the produce to big towns and cities. But the worry of the Rajpur cultivators would be over when with the efforts of the Project officers two Fruit Marketing Co-operative Societies will shortly be registered.

The experiment has proved contagious. Banana, orange and lemon gardens are now also springing up along with Papayas. The slogan in the area today is 'pumps for prosperity'. The project has already exhausted its funds for pump-taccavi and the enthusiastic cultivators are now tapping other sources such as the co-operative banks.

(M.K.R.)

Vikas Yatra

THERE ARE pilgrimages and pilgrimages. There is the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad for which lakhs of pilgrims trek their way to the banks of the holy Ganga to have a dip in her waters. Then there is a small village fair in which the villagers from surrounding hamlets come together to perform Pooja in honour of the village Goddess. But you may not have heard of a pilgrimage in which men and women with a caravan of bullock carts go from village to village carrying the message of the Five-Year Plan.

Such a Vikas Yatra was taken out in Maytask in the Bhadravati Community Development Block in Chanda District with the object of creating plan-consciousness among the people of the far-flung villages in the block. The Yatra was a seven-day drive in which the Yatris visited seven villages covering over 17 miles.

Many of us might have seen the pilgrims going on a pilgrimage on foot and walking the distance from their villages to the place of pilgrimage chanting the songs in praise of God to the rhythm of drums and cymbals. But if you had seen the Vikas Yatris numbering over 100 leading a procession of 35 bullock-carts, all in one row, one behind the other to the accompaniment of the gingling *"Ghungrus"* you would have at once realised the tide of awakening that has swept over our country-side. To see these pilgrims traversing from village to village singing Bhajans and shouting slogans at the pitch of their voices for the success of the Plan, would convince anyone that the rural India was destined to have a bright future and that too very soon.

The Yatra

The seven villages in the itinerary of the pilgrims were Plegaon, Masal, Visapur, Pirli, Dhaonli and Dongergaon. The Yatra commenced at Chora, a village ten miles from the Block headquarters in an inspiring atmosphere and ended at Nandori. The Yatris did not only carry the message of the plan to the places they visited but also initiated collective effort to fulfil the immediate requirements of the several villages situated in the middle belt of the Bhadravati Block. The emphasis of the Yatra being on the satisfaction of the immediate local needs, items such as cleansing of wells and tanks were given prominence. This work was done at almost all the places while the work of constructing approach roads or repairs to them was undertaken, in addition, in three villages.

A Planned Pilgrimage

Since the Vikas Yatra was a planned pilgrimage, each village in the itinerary had decided in advance what work should be done and in what manner. On the scheduled date of the arrival of the Yatra, Yatris joined hands with the local villagers and carried out the work. At each village, the Yatris were received on the threshold of the village and led in a procession to the specially erected pandal or some other meeting place. Everywhere they were received with a gusto of enthusiasm, entertained to dinner and in the end to cultural programmes. Each village throbbed with activity. The local villagers contributed Shramdan to complete the works in their village. The block development staff also joined them. In addition to the completion of the local village development work, the opportunity was seized to make informative speeches, to show educative films and to give demonstrations in soak pit and compost pit digging. It was also demonstrated how to fill up

these soak and compost pits. The utility of Mysore type latrines and also of the Magan Chula was impressed upon the people of the villages visited by the Yatris.

Sincere Effort

The Yatra had such an enthusiastic reception because it had a touch of sincerity. There was nothing artificial about it. Besides the cultural programmes, there were games for men. But women were not forgotten. They had their programmes too. They sang folk songs, young girls and old women joining in chorus. A Health Visitor would give wash to their babies and arrange a baby show. The 'townies' are quite familiar with these baby shows. But one must go and see a baby show arranged in a village to know how with utter shyness writ large on the innocent faces, mothers vied with one another to acquire the strange honour of being the mother of the most healthy and charming baby. The villagers of Palegaon had the privilege of having the State's Development Commissioner, Shri V. Isvaran, as a Yatri in their village together with other officials who joined the local villagers in constructing a bund over the local tank. In this village, the villagers offered Shramdan on 30 acres of land where farming is now done on co-operative basis.

The Bhadravati Development Block, to which goes the credit of organising this unique Vikas Yatra, was started on November 2, 1953. The Yatra was the second of its kind, the first having been undertaken last year. The Block consists of 126 villages with a population of 61,249. It has constructed 23 school buildings, 32 wells, seven Panchayat Ghars, 12 miles of road and two allopathic dispensaries. It has also one Ayurvedic and two veterinary dispensaries. It also boasts of having two high schools within its jurisdiction. The total non-loan expenditure done by the Government on the development work in this Block amounts to Rs. 3,56,938, the popular contribution being Rs. 2,00,712. Out of the 126 villages in the Block 123 have arrangements for supply of pure drinking water while 122 have their own schools.

A Gram Panchayat in Session

After the day's work

Personal Approach is the approved technique

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